

Rural population underrepresented among medical students

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(HealthDay)—In 2017, less than 5 percent of all incoming medical students were rural students, according to a study published in the December issue of *Health Affairs*, a theme issue on rural health.

Scott A. Shipman, M.D., M.P.H., from the Association of American

Medical Colleges in Washington, D.C., and colleagues obtained data on applicants and matriculants from the American Medical College Application Service for 2002-2003 through 2017-2018.

The researchers identified a 15-year decline in the number of rural medical students; in 2017, rural students represented less than 5 percent of all incoming medical students. In 2017, less than 0.5 percent of new medical students were students from underrepresented racial/ethnic-minority groups in medicine (URM) with rural backgrounds. In [medical school](#), there was substantial and increasing underrepresentation of both URM and non-URM students with rural backgrounds. The number of rural medical students would need to quadruple for the number of rural medical students entering medical school to become proportional to the share of rural residents in the U.S. population.

"Policy makers and other stakeholders should recognize the growing risk created by the decline in [medical students](#) with rural backgrounds, particularly in the absence of robust options to enhance the rural workforce," the authors write. "While solutions will require sustained, multifaceted efforts, increased awareness and ongoing measurement of this disparity are crucial first steps."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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